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BEFORE THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT HEARINGS BOARD CENTRAL PUGET SOUND REGION STATE OF WASHINGTON

SUQUAMISH TRIBE, KITSAP CITIZENS FOR RESPONSIBLE PLANNING, and JERRY HARLESS,

Case No. 07-3-0019c

Petitioners,

(Suguamish II)

٧.

KITSAP COUNTY,

ORDER FINDING COMPLIANCE [Re: Ordinance Nos. 493-496]

Respondent,

CITY OF POULSBO,

Intervenor.

I. PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

Kitsap County adopted the 10-year update of its comprehensive plan in 2006 (2006 Plan Update) with the enactment of four ordinances. Petitioners filed petitions for review challenging provisions of Ordinances 370-2006 and 367-2006¹ on various grounds. The Board's Final Decision and Order (FDO), issued August 17, 2007, found the County's use of four dwelling units per acre in its UGA low-density residential zones to be an appropriate urban density and approved the County's land capacity analysis.

The Court of Appeals reversed in part and remanded under an opinion published as *Suquamish Tribe v. Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board*, 156 Wn.App. 743, 235 P.3d 812 (2010). The Court ruled:

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Case No. 07-3-0019c (Suguamish II)

ORDER FINDING COMPLIANCE [Re: Ordinance Nos. 493-496]

¹ Ordinance 367-2006 adopted the Rural Wooded Incentive Program which has since been repealed and is no longer at issue in this case. Order of Partial Dismissal on Remand [Rural Wooded Incentive Program] (May 10, 2011).

The Board erred when it used a bright-line rule to approve the minimum urban density of four dwelling units per acre in Kitsap County.²

The Court further ruled the Board's reliance on a bright-line urban density resulted in failure to decide issues necessary to the resolution of the case:

We remand to the Board for it to consider whether

- (1) local circumstances show that four dwelling units per acre is an appropriate urban density in Kitsap County at this time,
- (2) reducing minimum density is internally inconsistent with the comprehensive plan goals, and
- (3) reducing minimum density is consistent with the GMA's goals.³

We remand for the Board to decide, based on current local circumstances, and without reliance on the four dwelling units per acre bright line rule, whether the County "double-dipped."

If local circumstances support a minimum urban density of four dwelling units per acre, the Board must also decide whether the County creates inconsistencies with the GMA's goals, the Buildable Lands Report [BLR], and the plan when it uses such a minimum density in the land capacity analysis.⁵

Following briefing and argument, the Board entered its Final Decision and Order on Remand on August 31, 2011. The FDO on Remand found the County's 2006 Plan Update non-compliant in two respects:⁶

- Kitsap County failed to comply with RCW 36.70A.110 and RCW 36.70A.070 (preamble) and was not guided by RCW 36.70A.020(1) and (2) when it adopted the portions of Ordinance[s] 370-2006 [and 367-2007] reducing the minimum density in the UL/UC designations and expanding the UGA boundaries based on the reduced density in its land capacity analysis. Because they were not adopted in compliance with the GMA, these provisions of Ordinance[s] 370-2006 [and 367-2007] were clearly erroneous in view of the entire record before the Board and in light of the goals and requirements of the GMA.
- Kitsap County failed to comply with RCW 36.70A.110 in determining the capacity of its UGAs as set forth in this Order.

32

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² *Id.* at 765.

³ *Id.* at 780.

⁴ *Id.* at 781.

⁵ *Id*.

⁶ FDO on Remand, at 64.

32

The Board remanded the matter to the County, setting a one-year compliance schedule in recognition of the complexity of the matter. The Board did not issue a determination of invalidity. Interim status reports were filed by the County as required during the compliance period.

On September 14, 2012, the Board received Kitsap County's Statement of Action Taken to Comply on Remand (SATC) and Index to the Record on Remand. The Petitioners responded to the County's submittal with only one objection: the County's failure to include the Poulsbo UGA in its restoration of 5 du/ac minimum urban densities and revised land capacity analysis. The City of Poulsbo moved to intervene and intervention was granted. On October 11, 2011, the Board received responsive briefs from Kitsap County and the City of Poulsbo.

The Compliance Hearing on Remand was convened October 16, 2012 by Margaret Pageler, presiding officer, in the Kitsap County Commissioners' Conference Room in Port Orchard. Panelists for the Board were William Roehl and Cheryl Pflug. Petitioner Suquamish Tribe was represented by its attorney Melody Allen. Petitioner Jerry Harless was present *pro se*. Petitioner Kitsap Citizens for Responsible Planning (KCRP) was represented by its attorney David Bricklin. Mr. Bricklin and Mr. Harless presented the arguments of the petitioners. The County was represented by Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Shelley Kneip, accompanied by County Planner Eric Baker. Intervenor City of Poulsbo was represented by its attorney Jim Haney. A number of public officials and interested citizens

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⁷ Petitioners' Response to County's Status Report/Statement of Actions Taken to Comply (Sept. 28, 2012). ⁸ The Board considered:

City of Poulsbo's Motion to Intervene and Declaration of Barry A. Berezowsky in Support of City of Poulsbo's Motion to Intervene (Oct. 4, 2012).

Petitioners Kitsap Citizens for Responsible Planning and Jerry Harless's Motion for Leave to File Supplemental Briefing (Oct. 11, 2012).

[•] Kitsap County's Opposition to Petitioners' Motion to Submit Supplemental Briefing, Oct.12, 2012.

City of Poulsbo's Response to Petitioners' Harless and KCRP's Motion for Supplemental Briefing (Oct. 12, 2012).

⁹ Board member James McNamara, formerly on this panel, has resigned from the GMHB. Cheryl Pflug has been appointed by Governor Gregoire to fill the Board vacancy for a member from the Central Puget Sound region.

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30 31 32 attended the hearing. 10 Court reporting services were provided by Sherrilyn Smith of Buell Realtime Reporting, LLC.

The hearing afforded each party the opportunity to emphasize the most cogent facts and arguments relevant to compliance. Board members asked questions seeking to thoroughly understand the history of the proceedings, the important facts in the case, and the legal arguments of the parties. At the hearing, the City of Poulsbo provided a copy of Volume I of the Poulsbo Sub-Area Plan (Final Draft December 17, 2001), adopted in 2002 by Kitsap County and the City of Poulsbo. The Board takes official notice of the Poulsbo Sub-Area Plan pursuant to WAC 242-03-630(4).

II. **BURDEN OF PROOF**

Following a finding of noncompliance, the jurisdiction is given a period of time to adopt legislation to achieve compliance. 11 After the period for compliance has expired, the Board is required to hold a hearing to determine whether the local jurisdiction has achieved compliance. 12 For purposes of Board review of the comprehensive plans and development regulations adopted by local governments in response to a noncompliance finding, the presumption of validity applies and the burden is on the challenger to establish the new adoption is clearly erroneous. 13 Here, the Board declined to impose invalidity. Petitioners thus bear the burden to establish the County's compliance action is clearly erroneous. In order to find the County's action clearly erroneous, the Board must be "left with the firm and definite conviction that a mistake has been made". 14

¹⁰ Attendees included Kitsap County Commissioners Charlotte Garrido and Robert Gelder, City of Poulsbo Mayor Becky Erickson and Planning Director Barry Berezowsky, Kitsap County Department of Community Development staff Angie Silva, Irwin and Judith Krigsman, and others.

¹¹ RCW 36.70A.300(3)(b). ¹² RCW 36.70A.330(1) and (2).

¹³ RCW 36.70A.320(1), (2) and (3)

¹⁴ Department of Ecology v. PUD1, 121 Wn.2d 179, 201, 849 P.2d 646 (1993).

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Within the framework of state goals and requirements, the Board must grant deference to local governments in how they plan for growth. ¹⁵ However, the Board's role in compliance proceedings is not identical to that during initial consideration of a Petition for Review. When the Board has identified non-complying provisions of a local jurisdiction's plan or regulations, the jurisdiction is under an obligation to bring those provisions into compliance and the Board is required to make a determination as to compliance. ¹⁶ Consequently, the Board reviews all of the County's actions regarding the remanded issues, whether or not challenged by Petitioners. ¹⁷

III. DISCUSSION

The Remanded Issues

In the FDO on Remand the Board ruled:

- Reducing minimum densities from 5 du/ac to 4 du/ac in the Urban Low and Urban Cluster (UL/UC) residential designations was inconsistent with local circumstances, inconsistent with the comprehensive plan, and inconsistent with GMA Goals 1 and 2.¹⁸
- The minimum density reduction caused expansion of the UGA substantially beyond what would otherwise be necessary to accommodate projected population and therefore was non-compliant with RCW

¹⁶See RCW 36.70A.300(3)(b) and RCW 36.70A.330 as well as *Abenroth, et al. v. Skagit County*, Case No. 97-2-0060c, coordinated with *Skagit County Growthwatch, et al. v. Skagit County*, Case No. 07-2-0002, Order on Reconsideration, (Jan. 21, 2009).

¹⁸ FDO on Remand at 28, 47.

¹⁵ RCW 36.70A.3201, in part: "The legislature intends that the board applies a more deferential standard of review to actions of counties and cities than the preponderance of the evidence standard provided for under existing law. . . Local comprehensive plans and development regulations require counties and cities to balance priorities and options for action in full consideration of local circumstances."

¹⁷Abenroth, at 4-6 (emphasis added): "RCW 36.70A.300(3)(b) is explicit. It requires Skagit County to comply with the GMA in areas where the Board's August 6, 2007, Order found noncompliance . . . The issue in compliance proceedings is somewhat different than it is during an original adoption. In compliance proceedings, the Board has identified an area of the local jurisdiction's comprehensive plan or development regulations that do not comply with the GMA. The local jurisdiction is under an obligation to bring those areas into compliance and demonstrate that fact to the Board . . . While the ordinance that is adopted to cure noncompliance is entitled to a presumption of validity, nevertheless, the local jurisdiction must still demonstrate to the Board that it has addressed the area of noncompliance identified in the FDO. A mere lack of objection by the petitioner does not demonstrate that the non-compliant provision has been cured. . . Even though Petitioners did not point out that the County had not taken action to comply pursuant to RCW 36.70A.300(3)(b), it does not relieve the County of its responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Growth Management Act or the Board of its responsibility to determine compliance pursuant to RCW 36.70A.330(1) and (2)."

32

- 36.70A.110 and RCW 36.70A.070 (preamble) and was not guided by RCW 36.70A.020(1) and (2).¹⁹
- Use of 4 du/ac minimum density as a Land Capacity Analysis (LCA) multiplier for UL/UC designations was not a supportable measure of capacity based on local circumstance and consistent with the GMA goals, the BLR and the comprehensive plan.²⁰
- Application of a double discount for critical areas in the Urban Restricted (UR) designation was clearly erroneous.²¹

The County's Compliance Action

On remand, Kitsap County undertook a thorough re-analysis of UGA development capacity and boundaries, with the intent not only to bring its 2006 Plan Update into compliance but also to provide a firm basis for subsequent GMA requirements. ²² The County conducted a "Trends Analysis" to identify current local circumstances indicating appropriate urban densities in each land use designation. The County then adopted a 5 du/ac minimum density for the UL/UC residential designations that make up 70% of the UGA acreage and had been reduced from 5 du/ac to 4 du/ac in the 2006 Plan Update.

The County revised its Land Capacity Analysis, based on the 2004 Countywide Planning Policy (CPP) population projections but informed by the 2010 census data and the trends analysis. Based on this review, the County adjusted its deductions for public facilities, its "underutilized land" calculation for vacant platted lots, its projected capacities for West and East Bremerton UGAs, and its density multiplier for UR lands (from the 1 du/ac minimum used in 2006 to the median allowed density of 2.5 du/ac). These changes, the County believes, have "truthed" the variables used in the land capacity methodology based upon actual development data, thus providing a foundation for the next GMA update and well as for current compliance.

¹⁹ FDO on Remand, at 37-38.

²⁰FDO on Remand, at 61-62.

²¹ FDO on Remand, at 50-51.

²² The County's SATC looks ahead to OFM population allocation and CPP update in 2013, BLR update in 2015, and 8-year Plan Updates in 2016. SATC, at 13 n.29.

Next, the County reviewed each of the UGAs where the 5 du/ac minimum had been reduced in 2006²³ and reshaped the boundaries, taking into consideration:

- annexations since 2006
- · existing or vested development at urban levels
- · feasibility of sewer service
- abundance of critical areas

The UGA was extended in places but, overall, the County's action removed 21% of the total UGA acreage established in 2006. The County made correlative changes to its capital facilities plan, its zoning regulations and its water and sewer regulations.

Petitioners' Objection

Petitioners commend the County's compliance response generally and its community outreach, including to Petitioners, in particular. However, Petitioners KCRP and Harless assert the County's exclusion of the Poulsbo UGA from its amendment fails to comply with the Board's rulings regarding both minimum density and land capacity analysis. These Petitioners urge the Board to enter an order of partial compliance and remand for correction of the Poulsbo UGA.²⁴

Board Discussion and Analysis

Minimum Urban Density and UGA Size

The FDO on Remand determined local circumstances did not support the County's action in reducing minimum densities in its UL/UC designation from 5 du/ac to 4 du/ac, and concluded that the resultant UGA expansions violated RCW 36.70A.110, .070 (preamble), and .020(1) and (2). On remand, the County has conducted a trends analysis, has determined that local circumstances did not support a reduction of minimum densities in the UL/UC designations, and has restored the minimum densities to 5 du/ac. The County's

²⁴ Petitioner Suquamish Tribe at hearing indicated no objection to a finding of compliance for the County.

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²³ The County did not include the Poulsbo UGA in the re-sizing. The Poulsbo UGA had not been expanded in 2006 and its 4 du/ac minimums were not a result of the 2006 downzoning.

action thus complies with GMA requirements for determination of "appropriate urban densities."

Similarly, the County's re-sizing of UGAs complies with RCW 36.70A.110. Rather than downsize its expanded UGAs uniformly to correspond to the restored minimum densities, the County conducted a fine-scale review of UGA boundaries, in view of 2010 census data, annexations and proposed incorporations, vested and platted development, critical areas, and feasibility of providing sewer service. In adjusting UGA boundaries, the County sought to include within the UGA those areas likely to develop at urban levels with urban services. The UGA boundary revisions removed 21% of the total UGA acreage established in 2006, while still accommodating the projected population. The County states: "Properties that remain in the UGA are logical urban properties that have current urban character and can be served by urban services." 25

Petitioners contend the County failed to fully comply because it omitted consideration of the Poulsbo UGA. Minimum urban densities in Poulsbo's UGA remain at 4 du/ac and the County has neither raised these minimums to 5 du/ac nor reduced the size of the Poulsbo UGA. Poulsbo and the County point out that minimum densities in Poulsbo's UGA were set at 4 du/ac in 2002, four years prior to the challenged UGA update and were **not reduced** by the 2006 action. Similarly, the boundary of the Poulsbo UGA was set in 2002 and was **not expanded** in the 2006 Update.

The Board recognizes the logic of Petitioners' argument. However, the Legal Issues raised by Petitioners in this case excluded consideration of the Poulsbo UGA from the outset. The Legal Issues and subsequent Board Orders are limited to County actions that **reduced** minimum densities and **expanded** UGA boundaries – neither action applicable to the Poulsbo UGA.

Growth Management Hearings Board

²⁵ County SATC at 21.

Page 9 of 14

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2 3 In the Petitions for Review, the Urban Density Legal Issues challenged the **minimum-density reductions** and concomitant **UGA expansions** in the 2006 Plan Update as follows:²⁶

- 1. Did Kitsap County ... fail to comply ... by allowing **reduced** urban residential densities, and **expanding** Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) by about 35%, as part of the 10-Year Update to its Comprehensive Plan (Plan Update)...? [Suquamish PFR]
- Did the County ... fail to comply ... when it **reduced** permitted urban residential densities by twenty percent, triggering the otherwise unnecessary **expansion** of several UGAs, as part of the Plan Update ...? [KCRP PFR]

On remand from the Court of Appeals, the Legal Issues again specifically challenged the County's "reduction of the minimum density and resultant oversized UGA." ²⁷

- Is the minimum urban density of four dwellings per acre, reduced from five dwellings per acre by Kitsap County Ordinances 370-2006 and 367-2006, an appropriate urban density for Kitsap County when considering local circumstances; RCW 36.70A.020(1) – (4) and (12); and RCW 36.70A.110?
- 2. Did the reduction in permitted urban residential densities result in an internally inconsistent plan in violation of RCW 36.70A.070?
- 3. Did the reduction of the minimum urban densities allowed inside the UGA result in an Urban Growth Area larger than necessary to accommodate the 20-year growth projection, inconsistent with RCW 36.70A.020(1) (4) and (12)?

The Board's FDO on Remand focused on the County's UL/UC land use designations and the County's 2006 reduction of minimum densities from 5 du/ac to 4 du/ac for UL/UC designated lands. ²⁸ The Board said the County's downzoning of minimum densities in these designations caused the UGA expansions and was the error that must be corrected: "The

²⁷ Prehearing Order on Remand (May 10, 2011), at 2.

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²⁶ See FDO (Aug. 17, 2007), at 10.

²⁸ FDO on Remand, at 46-47; Conclusions – Minimum Densities: "...reduced UL/UC densities ... reduction of minimum densities ... the minimum density reductions ... the minimum density reductions and concomitant UGA expansion ... the reduced density of 4 du/ac"

Board finds that Kitsap's reduction of UL/UC minimum densities caused the County to **expand** its UGAs in order to accommodate the projected population."²⁹

The final summation in the FDO on Remand states Kitsap County failed to comply when it "reduc[ed] the minimum density in the UL/UC designations and expand[ed] the UGA boundaries based on the reduced density...."30

The minimum density in the Poulsbo UGA was **not reduced** in the 2006 Update. Further, the UL/UC designations are not used in the Poulsbo UGA; rather, the County applies Poulsbo's Residential Low-density (RL) zoning. 31 The Poulsbo UGA was **not expanded** in the 2006 Update. In all, the Board finds the County reasonably concluded the Poulsbo UGA minimum density and boundary was not within the scope of the noncompliance it was required to address on remand.

- The Board finds the County has restored minimum urban densities in its previouslydownzoned UGAs to 5 du/ac based on documented local circumstances.
- The Board finds the County reduced its 2006 UGA acreage by 21%, still providing sufficient capacity to accommodate the 20-year population projection.
- The Board finds the County's UGA adjustments were guided by RCW 36.70A.020(1) and (2) and complied with RCW 36.70A.110 and .070(preamble).
- The Board finds Petitioners have not carried their burden of demonstrating the County failed to comply by not modifying the Poulsbo UGA minimum density and boundary.
- The Board finds and concludes the County's actions in restoring minimum densities and reducing the UGA comply with the GMA as set forth in the FDO on Remand.

Case No. 07-3-0019c (Suguamish II)

ORDER FINDING COMPLIANCE [Re: Ordinance Nos. 493-496]

Growth Management Hearings Board 1111 Israel Road SW, Suite 301 P.O. Box 40953 Olympia, WA 98504-0953 Phone: 360-664-9170

November 6, 2012 Page 10 of 14 Fax: 360-586-2253

32

³¹ While the Board accepts Petitioners' concern that UL and RL designations are similar, the County can hardly be faulted for reading the Board's FDO on Remand literally. Perhaps the Board's Order should have referred to "UL/UC and similar designations," but it did not.

Land Capacity Analysis

The FDO on Remand determined the County's Land Capacity Analysis was flawed. The Board found the County double-dipped when it discounted twice for constrained lands in its Urban Restricted (UR) designation. The Board also determined, regardless of a bright line rule, 4 du/ac was not an appropriate capacity multiplier in the County's UL and UC designations.

On remand, the County "truthed" the assumptions in its LCA methodology, including its capacity multipliers for all of its urban zones except the Poulsbo UGA RL. The County adopted a capacity multiplier of 5 du/ac for UL/UC designations. The County did not recalculate a capacity multiplier for the Poulsbo UGA RL designation. The County adjusted a number of its discount factors, eliminating the "double-dipping" for UR lands as well as for certain platted lots. The County retained its market factors of 5% for vacant land and 15% for underutilized land. The 25% market factor for the Poulsbo UGA was not adjusted. The Board finds the County's LCA revisions cure the double-dipping and capacity multiplier errors identified in the FDO on Remand.

As with the minimum density issue, the LCA issues from the outset in this case were framed such that the Poulsbo UGA was excluded. In the Petitions for Review, the Land Capacity Analysis Legal Issues were set forth as follows:³³

2. Did the County fail to follow guidance under RCW 36.70A.020(1) (2), and fail to comply with RCW 36.70A.070 (internally consistent plans) and RCW 36.70A.110 by expanding UGAs based on a non-compliant Urban Land Capacity Analysis (LCA), which results in substantially over-sized UGAs as part of the Plan Update adopted by Ordinance No. 370-2006, thereby promoting sprawl in direct contradiction of the fundamental goals of the GMA? [Suquamish PFR]

³³ See FDO (Aug. 17, 2007), at 14-15.

³² The Board notes the Poulsbo SubArea Plan (2002) states the City's holding capacity was calculated using the high end of the density range for each land use designation (5 du/ac for RL) and "an average of 5 units per acre was used in the unincorporated sub area." Poulsbo Sub-area Plan, at 19.

2. Did the County fail to be guided by RCW 36.70A.020(1) and (2), and fail to comply with RCW 36.70A.070 (internally consistent plans) and RCW 36.70A.110 when it expanded several UGAs based on a non-compliant Urban Land Capacity Analysis (LCA), resulting in an excessively oversized UGA as part of the Plan Update and zoning adopted with Ordinance Nos. 370-2006 and 367-2006? [KCRP PFR]

Thus at the outset, the Land Capacity Analysis issues before the Board in this matter were limited to the UGAs expanded in the 2006 Plan Update due to the flawed LCA.

After briefing and argument on remand,³⁴ the FDO on Remand summarized the LCA non-compliance as follows: "The Board determined, regardless of a bright line rule, four dwelling units per acre was *not an appropriate capacity multiplier in the County's Urban Low and Urban Cluster designations.*"³⁵ The County's action in applying a revised capacity multiplier to the UL/UC designations cures the non-compliance identified in the FDO on Remand. While the Board agrees with Petitioners that a changed LCA methodology will ultimately implicate the Poulsbo UGA, revisions to Poulsbo's RL designation or UGA are not within the required scope of compliance in the present case.³⁶

- The Board finds the County has corrected its Land Capacity Analysis by removing the double discount for Urban Restricted lands.
- The Board finds the County has corrected its Land Capacity Analysis by revising the capacity multipliers applicable to its UL/UC designations so that they are no longer based on a bright-line formula but reflect local circumstances.

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ORDER FINDING COMPLIANCE [Re: Ordinance Nos. 493-496] Case No. 07-3-0019c (Suquamish II) November 6, 2012 Page 12 of 14

³⁴ On remand from the Court of Appeals, the LCA issues were stated as follows;

^{5.} In the Urban Land Capacity Analysis, is the use of four dwelling units per acre as a uniform assumption for new urban development inside the UGA inconsistent with local circumstances (and thus inconsistent with RCW 36.70A.110 and .215, inconsistent with RCW 36.70A.020(1)-(4) and (12), and inconsistent with the county's comprehensive plan and thus inconsistent with RCW 36.70A.070)?

^{6.} Did the use of minimum urban density in the Urban Land Capacity Analysis result in an Urban Growth Area larger than necessary to accommodate the 20-year growth projection inconsistent with goals 1-4 and 12 of the GMA?

³⁵ FDO on Remand, at 2.

³⁶ The County's response lays out the schedule for addressing this recalculation in a coordinated process over the next several years. See SATC at 13, n.29.

- **The Board finds** Petitioners have not carried their burden of demonstrating the County failed to comply by not applying the revised LCA to the Poulsbo UGA.
- The Board finds and concludes the County's revisions to its LCA methodology comply with the GMA as set forth in the FDO on Remand.

IV. FINDING OF COMPLIANCE

Based upon review of the GMA, the remand from the Court of Appeals in *Suquamish Tribe v Central Puget Sound Growth Management Hearings Board,* 156 Wn.App. 743, 235 P.3d 812 (2010), the August 31, 2011 Final Decision and Order on Remand, the County's Statement of Actions Taken to Comply, the briefing and arguments of the parties, and having deliberated on the matter, the Board enters a **Finding of Compliance** for Kitsap County in Case No. 07-3-0019c.

V. ORDER

Based upon the foregoing, the Board ORDERS:

- Kitsap County's adoption of Ordinance Nos. 493-496 corrects the deficiencies found in Ordinance No. 370-2006 and complies with the goals and requirements of the GMA [RCW 36.70A.110, RCW 36.70A.070 (preamble), and RCW 36.70A.020(1) and (2)] as set forth in the Board's August 31, 2011, Final Decision and Order on Remand. The Board therefore enters a Finding of Compliance for Kitsap County re Ordinance Nos. 493-496.
- GMHB Case No. 07-3-0019c is closed.

Dated this 6th day of November, 2012.

Margaret Pageler, Board Member
William Roehl, Board Member

as provided in RCW 34.05.514 or 36.01.050. See RCW 36.70A.300(5) and WAC 242-03-970. It is incumbent upon the parties to review all applicable statutes and rules. The staff of the Growth

ORDER FINDING COMPLIANCE [Re: Ordinance Nos. 493-496] Case No. 07-3-0019c (Suquamish II)
November 6, 2012
Page 14 of 14

Management Hearings Board is not authorized to provide legal advice.

Growth Management Hearings Board 1111 Israel Road SW, Suite 301 P.O. Box 40953 Olympia, WA 98504-0953 Phone: 360-664-9170 Fax: 360-586-2253